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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/23/2018  
TAGS: PREL PTER MOPS KWBG IS  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL: DAS HALE'S DECEMBER 17 DISCUSSION WITH BG  
HEIMANN ON A THIRD PARTY MECHANISM

REF: STATE 132291

Classified By: A/DCM Marc Sievers, reasons 1.4 (b),(d)

**¶1. (S)** Summary: NEA DAS Hale met with IDF Strategic Division Head Brigadier General Yossi Heimann on December 17. DAS Hale gave a brief update of USG discussions regarding a Third Party Mechanism (TPM) in the Palestinian territories within the context of a two-state solution, noting the USG has respected Israeli sensitivity concerns. DAS Hale described USG in-house efforts that have not progressed beyond planning stages, and described a generic, non-interpositional monitoring role for TPM. BG Heimann appreciated the discretion, noting the IDF felt it had been bypassed when it learned EUCOM had initiated TPM planning. BG Heimann also requested a better sense of the USG's broad perspective regarding a two-state solution within the Middle East regional context. On proposed technical team visits to discuss Israeli security concerns, BG Heimann suggested an intelligence-related visit was more feasible in the short-term than one focusing on border security, given political realities in advance of the Israeli elections in February. End summary.

**¶2. (U)** Deputy Assistant Secretary David Hale met with the IDF Strategic Division Head BG Yossi Heimann on December 17. U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv Army Attaché COL John Chere, Michael Durkee from the Special Envoy for Middle East Regional Security (SEMERS) team, and pol-mil officer (notetaker) were present on the U.S. side.

**¶3. (S)** DAS Hale began with an update on SEMERS work, including specifically the TPM concept for the Palestinian territories within the context of a two-state solution. DAS Hale said the USG has respected the GOI's concerns regarding TPM, and has endeavored to treat such discussions discretely. He noted the USG has not briefed the Palestinians, Jordanians or Egyptians on TPM. DAS Hale said the USG has made efforts to incorporate Israeli concerns expressed during meetings in September.

**¶4. (S)** DAS Hale said USG efforts on TPM have been entirely in-house and have not progressed beyond planning stages. He explained that USG discussions regarding TPM have been generic in nature, with no defined roles or potential participating countries. Additionally, the planning process for TPM is not designing an interpositional force, but one focused on monitoring and verification. DAS Hale said the USG understood that TPM had caused anxiety in the IDF; he hoped those concerns have been allayed to a certain extent. He said the USG was eager to share our views on TPM with the Israelis, but the concept was not quite ready for discussion. BG Heimann replied that the GOI was willing to listen to USG

thoughts on TPM, but reiterated IDF surprise - believing it had been bypassed - after hearing EUCOM had initiated TPM planning.

¶5. (S) BG Heimann voiced a request that he claimed the GOI has frequently asked for but yet to obtain: the USG's broad strategic vision of regional security in the future Middle East in the context of a two-state solution. He referenced the "bucket" discussions in September, but noted that Israel still does not have a sense of how the U.S. views the strategic aspects of a two-state solution within the region. BG Heimann added that in recent months, the Palestinians have been reluctant to engage bilaterally with the IDF J-5, perhaps hoping to address issues through SEMERS. DAS Hale replied the USG was under the impression that the strategic discussions in September had provided the U.S. regional perspective, but acknowledged that perhaps another round would be warranted after the Obama Administration came into office, and had established its policies toward the region. He undertook to make sure this proposal was given consideration. COL Chere said there were "no real disputes" based on conversations with his IDF counterparts. However, he noted the IDF was looking for U.S. strategies for specific regional players, and how such strategies interconnected at a broader level.

¶6. (S) DAS Hale said the USG sees the need to talk to the Jordanian government regarding security controls necessary along their side of the border as part of a larger border assessment mission, as SEMERS General (ret.) James Jones discussed with Israeli CHOD Lt. Gen. Ashkenazi. DAS Hale assured BG Heimann that the USG would not divulge the

substance of its conversations with Israel on TPM to Jordan. BG Heimann appreciated the USG's discretion, but reiterated the need for such discretion. He opined that political signals from Amman over the last few months suggested that Jordan is reassessing its situation. While not a dramatic change, Jordan would nevertheless view the presence of Palestinian security forces along the Jordan Valley border as a "nightmare," Heimann said, and added the Jordanians would probably not admit as much to the United States.

¶7. (S) DAS Hale referenced papers submitted to IDF Head of Planning Major General Eshel's staff proposing the scope and timing of U.S. technical experts' visits to gain a better understanding of Israeli security capabilities and requirements in the West Bank. Durkee noted that finding the right personnel in the United States has been challenging - identifying their Israeli counterparts will prove crucial.

¶8. (S) BG Heimann said the intelligence team visit is perhaps more feasible than a border assessment team in the short-term, given the emphasis on technical issues. He said the border assessment team visit was "problematic" from a political perspective, noting the IDF might not be able to endorse such a visit until after the Israeli elections in February. Durkee suggested some border issues could be discussed on a general level, but acknowledged that real discussion can only take place when the GOI was ready. He reiterated that the USG has not gone into any detail with the Palestinians, although that has at times led to speculation on their part.

¶9. (U) Per reftel, DAS Hale and Durkee briefed BG Heimann that the administrative mandate of Gen. Jones expired on December 12. As such, DAS Hale will manage the work of the SEMERS team on an interim basis until the next Administration has the opportunity to decide on the future of the SEMERS mission.

¶10. (U) DAS Hale has cleared on this cable.

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